

STATINTL

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DISCUSSES CIA

GUEST: Pierre Salinger

PANEL: John Scali, ABC News
Bill Lawrence, ABC News

LAWRENCE: "Well, what about the Bay of Pigs disaster? Do you think that premature press publicity helped contribute to the failure of that operation?"

SALINGER: "I think it is highly likely that the operation would have failed without any stories being printed. Of course, we will never know that. But I do think that the prior publication of key information about that operation was of no doubt a great help to Mr. Castro. Now, I'm trying to separate a few things. I think probably the operation was ill conceived.

"I think -- there's great question now whether 1,000 men or 1,200 men could really have captured the island of Cuba, because part of the judgment of the Central Intelligence Agency at time was that a mere landing on the coast of Cuba would bring to the fore a great revolt among the Cuban people. And yet when the people landed, there not only was no revolt, there was actually no response by the Cuban people to this landing. So, that was the fatal misconception of the Bay of Pigs plan.

"The fact of the matter is, however, it made it very simple for Mr. Castro to make his preparations, when he could read every day in major U.S. newspapers that these preparations were going on for this invasion.

"I -- I'll give you another example, something that I -- I mean you may not think it is as ridiculous as I do. But I was reading in the New York Times the other day and they had a two paragraph article in that newspaper, and it's a great newspaper, which said, 'Esquire magazine today identified', and I forget the name of the fellow, 'as in charge of all foreign espionage activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.' Now, I don't know whether that fellow happens to be in charge of the foreign espionage activities of the CIA or not. But it seems to me it would be a little ridiculous to print that information.